

China toothpaste undergoes U.S. tests

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. authorities have added Chinese toothpaste to their list of imports from that country to undergo tests for chemical contamination.

The toothpaste testing comes after reports from Panama and the Dominican Republic about finding diethylene glycol, a chemical used in engine coolants, in toothpaste imported from China, the BBC reported Thursday. The same chemical was found in cough syrup reaching Panama, which has already killed about 50 people there.

The report said Chinese toothpaste makers sometime use diethylene glycol in place of the more expensive glycerin, saying small amounts of the chemical are safe in toothpaste.

"We are going to be sampling and testing all shipments of toothpaste that come from China," a spokesman for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration was quoted as saying. After Canada, China is the second-largest exporter of toothpaste to the United States.

Earlier this year melamine, a toxic chemical, reportedly was found in Chinese exports of wheat gluten, which is used in pet food. Contaminated pet food killed a number of cats and dogs in North America.

China has pledged to clean up its industries dealing in such exports.

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